

3-1949

### The Oberlin College Forensic Union...

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#### Recommended Citation

Auer, J. J. (1949). The Oberlin College Forensic Union... The Gavel of Delta Sigma Rho, 31(3), 52.

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## The Oberlin College Forensic Union . . .

J. JEFFERY AUER (L)

*Sponsor of the Oberlin College Chapter*

Discussion and debate are the essential tools of a democracy. Since the earliest town meetings in New England, the American people have relied upon these tools to guide them to effective and intelligent action. Today we discuss our common problems, the nation's business, in service and civic clubs, farm and church groups, high schools, women's clubs, community forums, and similar organizations. The foundation for this discussion should be a bedrock of carefully integrated facts and honest opinions, freely expressed and critically considered.

One of the contributions we believe a college may take to this widespread public discussion is to furnish trained student speakers, capable of providing provocative and critical analyses of current public questions. Since 1927, Oberlin College, through the Forensic Union and the Department of Speech, has offered such a service. This service is available without charge to organizations within a reasonable distance of Oberlin; there is no tariff on public discussion. Organizations are requested to furnish transportation for the speakers or to reimburse them for their travelling expenses, but otherwise the service is a contribution of Oberlin College.

The Forensic Union programs for 1948-1949 center in six major public questions or topics. These topics are presented in discussions or debates by two, three, or four speakers, who welcome a forum period for comments or questions by members of the audience. The length of the programs may be arranged to fit the time schedule of the participating organization. The six public questions for 1948-1949, as named and described in a folder sent to a large number of organizations in northern Ohio, are:

1. "Do We Want Federal Aid for Education?"  
(Ohio spends much more money per pupil for its schools than does Mississippi. Can local communities and states offer equality of educational opportunity? Should federal funds balance the account?)
2. "Should We Outlaw the Communist Party?"  
(The authors of the Mundt-Nixon Bill claim that Communism is today's greatest threat to America? Is it true? What can we do about it? Is suppression the

- American way to meet the problem?)
3. "Is the UN Out of Date?"  
(“Yes!” say those who believe that only a federal world government can survive the atomic age. “No!” say those who still have faith that the United Nations can keep the peace.)
  4. "How Can We Safeguard Our Civil Liberties?"  
(What basic freedoms are threatened in America today: minority rights? Free speech and press? The right to vote? Religious tolerance? How can we make these freedoms everybody's business?)
  5. "What's Holding Up the Peace?"  
(“Cold war . . . get tough . . . appeasement. . .” What are the real problems that create crises in Berlin, China, Palestine, Korea, and the Balkans? Is America's foreign policy adequate to solve them?)
  6. "Should We Revise the Taft-Hartley Law?"  
(Candidates in '48 faced this question; now it belongs to the new Congress. What changes are being advocated? What will they accomplish for labor? For management? For the public?)

Since 1927, when the Oberlin College Forensic Union went into the business of providing public discussion programs for clubs and organizations, its members have visited communities in almost every section of northern Ohio and in three neighboring states. The following is the list: Amherst, Ashland, Attica, Avon Lake, Bellevue, Berlin Heights, Berlinville, Birmingham, Brighton, Brooklyn Heights, Brunswick, Castalia, Chardon, Chatham Village, Chicago (Illinois), Clark, Cleveland, Cleveland Heights, Columbus, Conneautville (Pennsylvania), Crestline, Cuyahoga Falls, Doylestown, Elyria, Fairview, Florence, Fostoria, Galion, Gibsonburg, Greencastle (Indiana), Haskins, Henrietta, Homerville, Huron, Lake Forest (Illinois), Lakeside, Lakewood, LeRoy, Litchfield, Lorain, Loudonville, Mt. Gilead, Mansfield, Marblehead, Medina, Minerva, Monroeville, Napoleon, Niles, North Canton, North Ridgeville, Norwalk, Oberlin, Penfield, Pittsfield, Polk, Port Clinton, Ravenna, St. Charles (Illinois), Sandusky, Seville, Shreve, Spencer, Sullivan, Toledo, Valley City, Vermilion, Wadsworth, Wakeman, Wellington, Willard, York.

## With the Chapters . . .

### ALLEGHENY

Highlighting the first semester of forensic activities at Allegheny was a thousand-mile, five-day debate tour the first week in February. Nine debaters participated in eighteen contests at Dickinson College, Shippensburg State Teachers' College, Lafayette College, Lehigh University, Temple University, Swarthmore College, LaSalle College, and St. Joseph's College in

Philadelphia. Although most of the debates were non-decision, Allegheny won five of the six decision debates. Members of the debate squad making the trip were Jean Isherwood, Patricia O'Connell, Robert Blomquist, Jeff Hopper, Mark Funk, Al Krall, Barbara Bounds, Evan Engstrom, and Austin Swanson.

Debating in the annual Mt. Mercy Tournament on February 19 were Jean Isherwood, Pat